

George Adams House (John Thornton House)  
West side of S. Broadway St.  
Montour  
Gem County  
Idaho

HABS No. ID-44

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
ID,  
23-10571  
1-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

GEORGE ADAMS HOUSE  
(John Thornton House)

Location: West side of South Broadway  
Montour, Gem County, Idaho  
UTM: 11/553950/4862950

Present Owner: United States Department of the Interior

Present Occupant: Unoccupied

Present Use: Unused

Statement of  
Significance: This house is an example of vernacular  
picturesque bungalow style in a small  
town setting.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of erection: 1915

Builder: Carpenter Victor Sheldrew

Historical Narrative:

The bungalow was built in 1915 for George Adams, by local carpenter Victor Sheldrew. In 1922, Adams sold the property to Harry Sweet, originally of the town of Sweet, who lived here until 1945. (See also historical discussion for Idaho Northern Railroad house.)

Bibliography:

Emmett Index, 17 Jan. 1915, 3:3; 18 March 1915, 8:3;  
17 March 21, 8:3.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATIONGeneral Statement

1. Architectural merit and interest: The house is an example of the vernacular picturesque bungalow style in a small town setting.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.
3. Summary description: One-and-a-half stories, approximately rectangular in plan, 28 by 42 feet, with a thirty-foot-long shed.

Detailed description of the exterior

1. Foundations: The foundations are of concrete with a cement finish. Their visible portion varies in height from 2 inches at the east to about 14 inches at the west side of the house. They are in good condition.
2. Wall construction: The walls are of wood shingles, laid with about 5 inches exposed, painted dark reddish brown, and eroded from the weather.
3. Structural system: The house is of wood frame construction, with wood framed floor, ceiling, and rafters.
4. Porches, stoops: At the front entrance door there is a concrete stoop with a handrail of pipe one inch in outside diameter.
5. Chimneys: The fireplace chimney is of red bricks and projects from the east (front) wall of the house. The bricks are exposed. There are two concrete caps where the chimney narrows above the level of the fireplace, and another such cap at the top of the chimney. Near the rear (west) of the house a smaller brick chimney pierces the roof. Near the southern end of the shed a box-like wooden flue projects above the roof.
6. Openings, doorways and doors: The doors are framed with flat wooden trim  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide at the jambs and 6 inches high at the head. The head trim projects  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches beyond each side of the jamb trim. A  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch wide backband projecting  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch from the face of the trim frames the jamb trim and follows around the lower edge and ends of the head trim, meeting the simple cap molding of the head trim. Thus these frames have the so-called "ears" sometimes found in Greek Revival style door and window frames. The front door is a French door 3 panes wide and 5 panes high. There is a similar exterior door at the west bedroom.
7. Openings, windows: Window frames follow the same design as door frames, except that at the dormer windows the backbands are missing. In general, windows are 1/1 double-hung wooden sash; but the attic windows are inward-swinging casements, as are those on the east wall flanking the fireplace and those flanking the bay window of the dining end of the central room. The center windows there are fixed sash. The northeast bedroom has horizontal sliding aluminum-frame windows of recent date. All glass is clear.

At the shed, the porch has aluminum sliding sash at the east side and, at the west side, glass fixed with quarter-round wooden moldings.

8. Roof, shape, covering: The roofs are gable roofs, and they are covered with mineral-surfaced composition shingles. At eaves the original wood shingles are visible. The south-facing slope has newer roofing, which has the pattern of wood shingles. The north-facing slopes have older roofing of continuous wavy-edged bands. The ridge is capped with a galvanized-steel, beaded cover piece shaped at its lapping edges to fit a corrugated steel roof. The shed roof is of gable shape and covered with corrugated steel with a ridge cap-shaped as described.
9. Roof, eaves: The rafters project at the eaves and the soffit is formed by boards. At the gable ends, a stout bargeboard is supported on triangular brackets. At the larger first floor gable of the west (rear) side the brackets are incomplete, and they are not present at the south gable of the shed.
10. Roof, dormers: There is a dormer at the north side, of shed type, with triangular brackets supporting its bargeboards.

#### Detailed description of interior

1. Floor plan: At the ground story, the house has a large central room crossing from the south to the north. The south end of this room is intended as the dining space, since it has a built-in buffet. Adjoining this room at the east through a wide framed opening, is a small room containing the fireplace and the front door. On the opposite side (west) of the central room is the kitchen. From the northern end of the central room one may enter a bedroom on the west and one on the east. The door to the stairway to the attic is located at the middle of the east wall of the central room. The bathroom is at the center of the rear (west) of the house and is entered through a short hallway that connects the rear bedroom and the kitchen.

At the attic there are three low rooms in line, the easternmost containing the stairway.

2. Stairway: The stairway to the attic is concealed and is entered through a door from the central room.
3. Flooring: At the ground story, the kitchen, bathroom, and connecting hall have linoleum flooring. The bedroom, central room, and room with the fireplace have wall-to-

wall carpeting. The attic has softwood flooring with 3 3/16-inch exposed width of boards. The shed has a concrete floor.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: At the first story, the walls are plaster on wood lath and the ceilings are covered with 12-inch-square ceiling tile of soft fiberboard. The attic walls and ceilings are of a thin, hard cardboard. The small room at the south end of the shed has sand-finished plaster walls and ceiling. The rest of the shed has vertical vee-joint matchboards on its long walls and shingles at the end walls and no ceiling. All walls and ceilings - except the ceiling tile - are painted. The plaster in the shed may be calcimined.  
Ceiling tile as seen in this house is usually applied as a remedial measure to cover the original cracking plaster ceiling.
5. Doorways and doors: Doorframes are of flat wood, 3-1/4-inches wide at head and jambs, with a 3/4-inch-wide backband. The trim of the wide opening between the south end of the central room and the room with the fireplace is similar, but the trim is wider - 7-1/8-inches wide. Doors are of the single-panel type, with a 13 1/2-inch-high bottom rail, and with top rails and stiles 5 inches wide. Window openings are framed in the same manner as doorways.
6. Interior trim: At the fireplace, the wooden mantelshelf has a face pattern of recessed rectangles and is supported on consoles. The tops of the flanking bookcases have a matching face pattern, as does the top of the buffet at the south end of the central room. Each bookcase flanking the fireplace has a pair of glass doors, one large pane of clear glass per door. The buffet has doors and drawers at its lower portion. Above, there are two small windows centered over it with glass-enclosed cabinets at each side. All of this fits into a projecting bay of the room. At either side of this bay, there is an inward opening casement now glazed with a mirror. These were originally windows and, with the projecting bay, extended across the entire south wall of the central room. Above, a wooden plate rail, supported on small wooden brackets, extends across the whole south wall.

The fireplace is faced with rug-cut bright red bricks with deeply recessed raked joints. The hearth is raised 4 1/2 inches above the floor, and its side and front edges are banded by a 3/8-inch-thick continuous steel bar 5 inches high and bent to form the corners. The iron is painted with copper paint, or it is copper plated. Light grayish ceramic tiles appear to have originally covered the concrete hearth. Only one of these tiles remains in place.

An iron crane is hinged at the right-hand side of the fireplace opening. The interior of the fireplace is firebrick.

7. Hardware: The hardware is plain, economical, and of steel with a copper-plate finish.
8. Mechanical and electrical equipment: The rear chimney appears to be supported on a cabinet in the corridor near the bathroom. The chimney has two stove flue thimbles opening into that corridor and one on the opposite side opening into the central room. The original heating of the house appears to have been by means of stoves. Recent heating seems to have been by electric baseboard-type heaters and small electrical panel heaters mounted in the walls. These have been removed.
9. A note on additions and remodeling: The lower gabled portion of the west bedroom is an addition. The shingles show this, as does the settling of the floor at the addition. The kitchen and bath are also the result of remodelings. The west flanking window of the south wall of the central room buffet had to be mirrored because a projecting box was built for the kitchen refrigerator, and that box passed in front of this window.

#### Site and surroundings

1. Orientation and general setting: The front of the house faces east toward the street. The Victor Sheldrew House is adjacent to the north, and the school is across the street. The land is flat.
2. Historic landscape design: There is a concrete-paved terrace at the front entrance with the house sheltering it on the north and the shed on the west. The outline of the terrace is angular, not paralleling the house walls. There is a circle in concrete, about 6 feet across, near the front door. This may have been a pond. A large maple tree with a trunk of about 8 feet in diameter stands at the street and a blue spruce and other trees are nearby. There is foundation planting at the house.
3. Outbuildings: At the street and south of the house and its front garden, there is a single-car garage of design similar to that of the house. It has a corrugated iron roof.

#### PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by Dennett, Muessig & Associates,

Iowa City, Iowa, in cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific Northwest Region. It fulfills the Bureau of Reclamation's obligations under a memorandum of agreement between the Bureau, the State of Idaho, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, pursuant to 36 CFR 800. The structure was photographed, measured, and drawn March - September, 1979, by Sarah J. Dennett and Hans Muessig, Project Supervisors; Wesley I. Shank, Project Architectural Historian/Historical Architect, (Iowa State University); Martha H. Bowers, Project Historian; Robert A. Ryan, Project Photographer; and Philipp Muessig, Project Assistant.

APPENDIX

CHAIN OF TITLE: GEORGE ADAMS HOUSE

Description: Lot 48, Dewey Lots

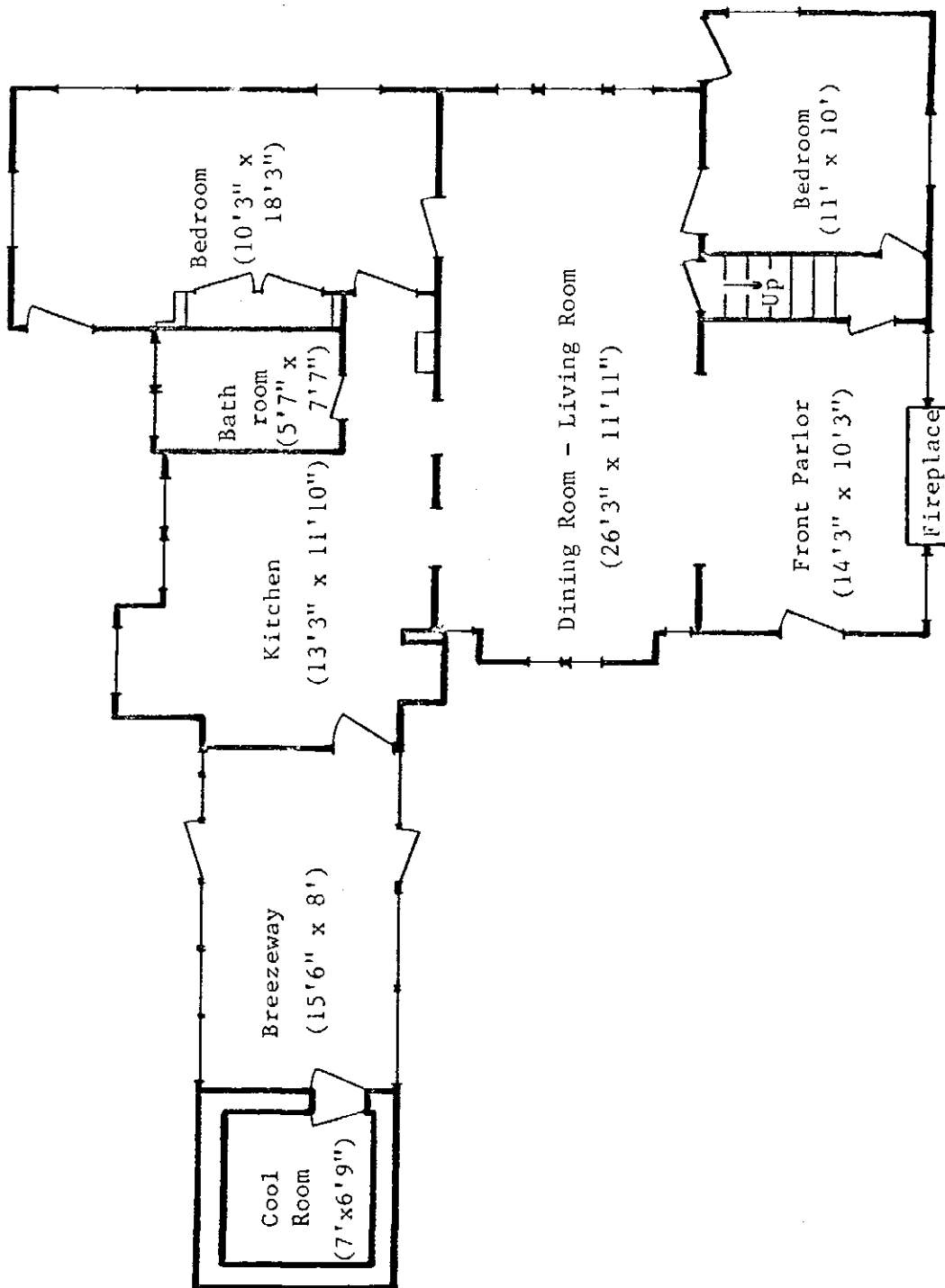
Reference: Records Office, Gem County Courthouse, Emmett, Idaho

- 1919 Deed 5 December 1919  
Recorded 3 February 1920  
Book 13 Deeds, p. 251  
Dewey Investment Co.  
to  
George A. Adams
- 1922 Deed 15 January 1922  
Recorded 21 February 1922  
Book 14 Deeds, p. 520  
George A. Adams & Cora Adams  
to  
Harry Sweet
- 1945 Deed 26 February 1945  
Recorded 11 April 1945  
Book 29 Deeds, p. 124  
Harry Sweet & Annie M. Sweet  
to  
G. C. Kibbey & Eva S. Kibbey
- 1964 Deed 26 August 1964  
Recorded 26 August 1964  
Deed Instrument # 88450  
Eva S. Kibbey  
to  
Clark Cox & Beulah Cox
- 1969 Deed 7 August 1969  
Recorded 13 October 1969  
Deed Instrument # 98678  
Clark Cox & Beulah Cox  
to  
Kathryn H. Ames
- 1971 Deed 7 December 1971  
Recorded 7 December 1971  
Deed Instrument # 103541  
Kathryn A. Ames  
to  
John Ernest Thornton & Donna J. Thornton

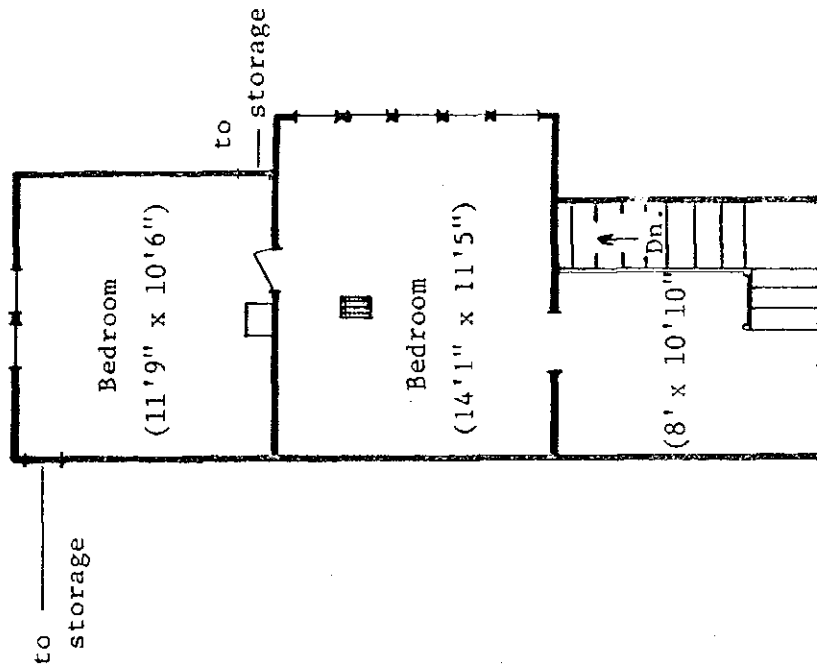


Continued - Chain of Title for the George Adams House

1977 Deed 6 June 1977  
Recorded 23 June 1977  
Deed Instrument #120529  
Nelson R. Mabee & Marforie Mabee; John E. Thornton &  
Donna Thornton; Donald E. Shoemaker & Dorthy  
Shoemaker  
to  
U. S. A.



GEORGE ADAMS HOUSE - First Floor    N  
approx. 1/8 scale



N ➤

GEORGE ADAMS HOUSE - Second Floor

approx 1/8 scale